

MICHIGAN LEGWORK

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH

APRIL 2006

DLEG Receives Telly Award for Commercial Services Video

By Lynda M. Robinson

THE BUREAU OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES' "Orientation Video" received an award in the 27th Annual Telly Awards, a national program recognizing outstanding achievement in the TV, commercial, and video industry.

The "Orientation Video," produced jointly by the Bureau of Commercial Services (BCS) and Office of Media Technology (OMT), received a Bronze Telly. The video explains the bureau's function, introduces key personnel, defines the department's mission, and orients new board members to their role in the department.

BCS contributes to the licensure and regulation of professionals in 28 occupations and facilitates the creation, registration, and maintenance of records for more than one million business entities.

Top production professionals judged more than 12,000 entries for the 27th Annual Telly Awards. Judges come from throughout the country, representing large and small firms including advertising agencies, TV stations, production houses, and corporate video departments.

Entries may receive a Silver Telly statuette, the highest honor, or a Bronze Telly for outstanding achievement. About seven to 10 percent of the entrants are awarded a Silver Telly, while 18 to 25 percent receive a Bronze.

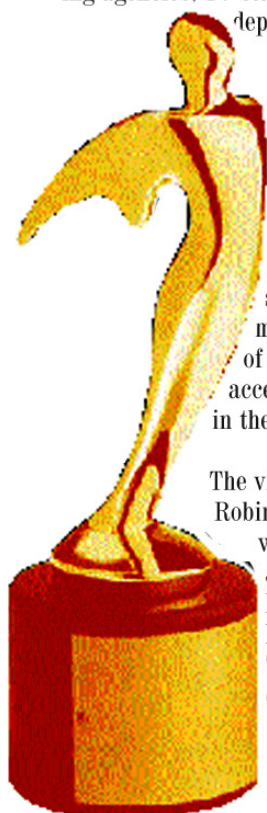
BCS and OMT were congratulated and presented with their Telly at the State of DLEG meeting held March 30. Dave Callanan, director of OMT, and Andy Metcalf, director of BCS, accepted congratulations for all of those involved in the production.

The video was narrated by BCS staff member Yvette Robinson, and much of the co-producing duties were carried out by former BCS staff member Jeannine Benedict, now with the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs. OMT Media Production Specialist Ken Elkins and OMT Technical Services Manager Steve Kline produced and directed the video.



Co-producer Ken Elkins attaches a microphone to narrator Yvette Robinson's lapel.

The Telly Awards was founded in 1980 to showcase and give recognition to outstanding non-network and cable commercials. The competition was expanded several years ago to include film and video productions.



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A Message from the Director

The warmer weather we are now enjoying is just one of several positive developments we have seen in Michigan in recent weeks. As you know, Governor Granholm has put forth an ambitious plan to turn our state's economy around. I am pleased to relate two recent successes that have direct links to our department.

First, as you no doubt have learned from the media, the state's minimum wage has been raised from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.40 per hour over the next two years. Michigan now joins 17 other states that have increased their minimum wage over federal standards.

The governor signed Senate Bill 318 into law on March 28, giving Michigan its first minimum wage increase since 1997. The increase will take place in three steps. On October 1, 2006, the minimum wage will increase to \$6.95; then to \$7.15 on July 1, 2007; and finally to \$7.40 on July 1, 2008.

In her 2006 State of the State address, Governor Granholm had pledged that workers would receive the pay increase this year. At last month's signing of the bill, she said, "Today is a celebration for working men and women across Michigan. This is a simple matter of fairness — anyone who puts in a fair day's work should receive a fair day's pay."

The other good news is that the MI Opportunity Partnership has achieved its first-year goal of matching 30,000 unemployed Michigan residents with job openings pledged by employers across the state. The magic number was reached during the week of April 17, a full week and a half before the April 30 goal date.

Our Bureau of Workforce Programs continues to work with Michigan Works! agencies and our Regional Skills Alliances as we enter the second year of the initiative on May 1. The governor — and we — have committed to matching 40,000 citizens with jobs in year two of the program. If you know of an employer with a job to fill, please ask him or her to call 1-800-285-WORKS or go online at <http://www.michigan.gov/jobstoday>.

I am very pleased to welcome Sharon Bommarito as the newest acting deputy director in DLEG. Sharon, who has served our department so well as director of the Unemployment Insurance Agency, has been named to fill the vacancy left by Dave Plawecki. Please read more about Sharon on page 3.

On a sad closing note, I would like to offer my condolences to the family and friends of Julius Smith, a senior analyst with the Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety, who passed away on April 7. Please see the article about Julius on page 3.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Swanson



Present at Governor Granholm's signing of Senate Bill 318 were (l. to r.) Jack Finn, Wage & Hour Division administrator, former DLEG Deputy Director Dave Plawecki, and Acting DLEG Director Bob Swanson.

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Sharon Bommarito Named Acting Deputy

Unemployment Insurance Agency Director Sharon M. Bommarito has been named acting deputy director to fill the vacancy left by David Plawecki.

In this position, she oversees operations of the Workers' Compensation Agency, Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), Office of Wage and Hour, MES Board of Review, Workers' Compensation Magistrates, and Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission.

Sharon joined the Department as UIA director in September 2003. As director she managed the state agency that administers Michigan's unemployment insurance program.

Prior to joining the UIA, Sharon had been the director of personnel for the City of Lansing. She

managed personnel services for the city's 1,200 employees and oversaw labor relations for nine bargaining units. She also administered the unemployment insurance; safety; training; workers' compensation; medical services; benefits; employee recognition; recruitment and selection, classification and compensation programs.

Sharon's previous state service includes serving as deputy director of personnel in former Governor James Blanchard's office, coordinating operations in the human resources area. She was also involved in the gubernatorial appointment process for state boards and commissions, judicial and statutory job appointments, and was the governor's liaison with the Department of Civil Service. She is a graduate of Michigan State University.



Sharon Bommarito

Michiganians Tend to Stay in Michigan

Is Michigan losing more people to migration than it gains? Do people who live in Michigan want to stay here?

These questions and more were answered by State Demographer Kenneth Darga, who presented "Michigan Migration Patterns" at the State of DLEG meeting on March 30. His presentation was based on data from the 2000 U.S. Census.

While Darga conceded that Michigan loses more residents to other states than it gains, he said media reports of "residents fleeing the region" just aren't true.

"People who live here generally want to stay," he said, noting that Michigan's total net migration is "roughly in balance. Our total net migration over time has improved relative to the 1970s and 80s."

Darga added that Michigan's net migration by age is positive for some key age groups. Most significantly, those between the ages of 30 and 54 tend to stay in Michigan — or return to Michigan — to

work and raise their families. He said Michigan ranks number one in the U.S. for population retention in that age category as well as for young persons between the ages of five and 19.

He asked the audience which state had the lowest rate of out-migration to other states from 1995 to 2000? In other words, which state had the best population retention in the U.S.?

The answer? Michigan.

"Of all people counted by the 2000 Census who reported that they lived in Michigan in 1995, 93.9 percent were still in Michigan in 2000," Darga said. "Only 6.1 percent were living in other states."

He said people in Michigan have deep Midwestern roots and also recognize that "Michigan is a good place to live."

Darga noted that technical factors, such as Michigan's water boundaries, also tend to keep people here.



Kenneth Darga

Construction Codes & Fire Safety Analyst Julius Smith Passes Away

We are saddened that Julius Jay Smith, a senior analyst with the Office of Local Government and Consumer Services, Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety, died April 7 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 51.

In addition to his work at DLEG, Mr. Smith was deeply involved in community activities and served on the board of directors for the Greater Lansing Urban League, Capitol Area Head Start, Lansing Human Relations Board, NAACP, and MLK Holiday Commission.

Mr. Smith is survived by his wife, Patricia Crawford Smith; a daughter, Stephanie Field Smith; brothers, Burton Smith and Kenneth Smith; and sisters, Marianne Geula and Patricia Smith Hopkins.

Outstanding Efforts by Staff Recognized at State of DLEG Meeting

The State of DLEG meeting on March 30 was an opportunity for bureaus within the department to give special recognition for outstanding staff work over the past six months. Individuals recognized were:

Bureau of Employment Relations: Denise Hinneburg, Maria Selweski, and Robert Strassberg.

Career Education Programs: Carol Jacob

Michigan Commission for the Blind: Bonnie Betz, Susan Turney, and Debbie Wilson.

MI 360 Project: Dell Alston, Elizabeth Band, Jeannine Benedict, Dave Callanan, Linda Colagross, Nella Davis-Ray, Dan Dykstra, Judy Ezop, Terry Fobbs, Mary Grill, Sherri Heibeck, Melody Lindsey, Patty Meyer, Mary Miller, Pamela Newsome-Hartman, Renée Ortlieb, John Peck, Sandy Peck, Alison Rodgers, Bob Robertson, Lynda Robinson, Dorothy Ruelle-Elliott, Sue Ann Searles, Sue Sherman, Brian Sydnor, and Andrea Tolle.

Office of Media Technology: Nirva Civilus, Ken Elkins, Debra Hill, and Lynda Robinson. Also recognized with appreciation were Deb LaPine, director of Career Education Programs, and Brenda Njiwaji, director of Workforce Programs.

Project MOVE: Project MOVE was honored with the Adjutant General's Quality Cup Award for 2005;

it was established in 1998 to formally recognize team efforts to improve the quality of services provided by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA). The 2005 honor for Project MOVE was the first time the award had been given to a department outside DMVA. Project MOVE, in the Bureau of Workforce Programs, was recognized for its accomplishments on behalf of veterans' employment. The award was formally presented to Project MOVE at the governor's cabinet meeting in Jan. 2006.

Unemployment Insurance Agency: Margaret Evans, Katie Luchonoc, and Joe Mulligan.

In addition, many staff from throughout the department were applauded for assisting in the aftermath of **Hurricane Katrina:** Ralph Ambriz, Machele Cardin, Marta Chouinard, DeWayne Cord, Sharman Cross, Robert Dayringer, Dan Dykstra, Jack Finn, Terry Fobbs, Karen Gagnon, Jennifer Gollbach, Myrtle Gregg-LaFay, Tom Healy, Cheryl Holloway, Joyce Karr, James Kivell, Keith Langworthy, Matt Macomber, Sharon Malone, Mike Mason, Jack Nolish, Jennifer Olson, Diane Otis, Jim Pike, Jeff Pillon, Barry Simmonds, Rodney Singleton, Andrea Stolicker, Jeanette Tuttle, Chris Williams, Patti Young, and Cindy Zastrow. In addition, more than 100 employees with the Unemployment Insurance Agency who staffed the temporary Katrina Call Center in Detroit were recognized. Please see their names on page 5 of the February issue of *Michigan LEGwork* (http://www.michigan.gov/cis/0,1607,7-154-10573_17416_17424-74316--,00.html).



Ralph McKay discusses how Project MOVE assists returning Michigan veterans.



Three musicians who also happen to be state employees provided a special musical treat at the March 30 State of DLEG meeting. Left to right are Bill Malone, guitar, Department of Information Technology; Dave Ludington, drums, Department of Human Services; and Patrick Hudson, bass, DLEG Energy Office.

Best Wishes, Dave

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth paid tribute to outgoing Deputy Director Dave Plawecki at receptions held in Detroit on April 5 and in Lansing on April 11. Dave announced last month that he is taking a sabbatical to “recharge his batteries” after 35 years of government service at the county, state, and federal levels. Please see the March issue of *Michigan LEGwork* for an article about Dave’s accomplishments.



Governor Granholm surprised Dave and his wife, Linda, by stopping by to visit during his farewell reception at Cadillac Place.



Charlotte Duncil with the Michigan Employment Security (MES) Board of Review worked with Dave for many years.



Acting DLEG Director Bob Swanson (left) thanks Dave for his outstanding contributions to the department.

Charities, Families Express Thanks

Department of Labor & Economic Growth employees have been donating Casual Wednesday dollars to charities for more than a year now. And, of course, during the holidays, DLEG always remembers needy families. Here’s a sampling of the thank you notes we have received:

“Thank you for your recent gift to the American Red Cross, Mid-Michigan Chapter. On behalf of all of those whom we serve through your kindness, again, thank you. We hope that we will continue to merit your support.”

“We just wanted to thank you for thinking of us at this special time of year. We truly appreciate the gifts and generosity and feel very privileged to have been chosen as one of your two military families. Wishing you and yours a wonderful 2006.”

“I want to thank you for choosing Make-A-Wish Foundation of America and express my appreciation for your generous contribution. Each year, thousands of children with life-threatening medical conditions are referred to us — children who deserve the opportunity to realize their one greatest wish. With your help, we can create amazing experiences filled with hope, strength, and joy. ... Our wish children are very fortunate to have such committed donors and champions on their side.”

perfect — it was like someone’s mother and father had shopped for them. Bless you.”

“Thank you for helping make this a tremendous Christmas for us. It is so wonderful that there are people like you that help complete the holiday for others. Unfortunately, sometimes no matter how hard we work, we sometimes fall short. The choices hardship forces us to make are not always popular. You enabled me to have presents and pay bills. The appreciation I have for this is unmatched. I hope your holidays are as full as you have made ours. Thank you!”

Hospice of Lansing/Ionia Area Hospice printed this article in the winter 2006 edition of its newsletter, *Hospice Matters*: “In recent months, [we] have been the recipients of ‘Casual Day’ donations from several mid-Michigan employers. On ‘Casual Days’ employees are allowed to dress casually if they make donations to worthy charitable causes. ... We’d also like to thank the employees of the Department of Labor and Economic Growth. ... Perhaps their generosity will inspire others to follow in their footsteps. We are grateful for these thoughtful donations!”



Professional Activities

Congratulations to **Mel Farmer**, director of the METRO Authority, who was presented with an Outstanding Service Award March 22 by the Michigan Municipal League (MML) to "recognize the great work that he does," said Michael Matheny, MML president. One of the responsibilities of the METRO (Metropolitan Extension Telecommunications Rights-of-Way Oversight) Authority is to ensure the reasonable control and management of public rights of way by municipalities within Michigan.

Terry Fobbs, senior policy administrator in DLEG's Executive Office, represented Governor Jennifer Granholm and the Department of Labor & Economic Growth at the ribbon-cutting ceremony March 30 of the new Michigan Veterans Business Resource Center in Flint. In his remarks, Terry said, "It is our intent that this center will ... eventually expand its services so that it can do for the entire state what it will do for veterans here." The center is one of four in the U.S. providing seminars and services for veteran entrepreneurs. As a partner in the endeavor, DLEG will provide speakers and other support for entrepreneurial classes.

Congratulations to **Dianne Duthie**, director of the Office of Adult Education and Spanish-Speaking Affairs, and her staff for hosting the first annual Michigan Adult Education & Training Conference March 20-23 in Kalamazoo. More than 450 adult education administrators, teachers, counselors, and literacy council volunteers participated. With the theme of *Reaching Out — Changing Lives*, 50 breakout sessions were offered to provide participants with new tools and best practices in adult education. **Robert Swanson**, acting director of DLEG, was a key-note speaker, and **Deb LaPine**, director of the Bureau of Career Education, was emcee. The conference featured a GED annual workshop given by **Ben Williams**, state GED administrator; and a MAERS (Michigan Adult Education Reporting System) workshop given by **Dean Smith**, MAERS administrator. Adult Education staffers **Cliff Akujobi**, **Linda Colagross**, **Dianne Duthie**, **Linda McMillan** and **Sandy Thelen** participated in the department update for administrators and grant continuation workshop; **Carol Jacob** participated in a panel on volunteer literacy; and **Erica Nakfoor** moderated a workshop on the distance learning pilot program. Special thanks to **Janice Vernon**, Office of Adult Education, and **Cindy Blanche**, **Gina DiNatale Coon**, **Jim Kremer**, and **Jeannie Vogel**, all with Media and Public Relations, for their work on the conference.

Karen Pohja, education consultant in the Office of Career and Technical Preparation (OCTP), Bureau of Career Education, was one of three speakers selected from around the country to participate in a national web cast on "National Standards for Entrepreneurship Education to Enhance Student Performance." The panel discussion focused on national and state models of entrepreneurship education. Karen presented OCTP's highly successful Michigan model of entrepreneurship education and curriculum development. This included the award of 15 entrepreneurship curriculum development grants totaling more than \$1 million, which resulted in the startup of 266 entrepreneurship programs that articulate from high schools to community colleges, and two statewide conferences on entrepreneurship education. The web cast took place March 31 at Ohio State University and was funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Mid Michigan District Business Service Team, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), has put together a district-wide Micro Enterprise Program under the direction of District Manager **Lou Adams**, Bay City/Midland Site Manager **Dave Corcoran**, Mt. Pleasant Site Manager **Thom Lang**, and Business Services Representative **Jim Garrison**. The program was developed in collaboration with Community Mental Health partners and serves MRS customers who are interested in exploring small business/self-employment as an option. Micro enterprise projects are very small in scope and generally provide part-time work activities. **Allison Hudson** was recently hired as micro enterprise coordinator. She has a bachelor's degree in business administration, majoring in marketing, purchasing and logistics, from Central Michigan University.



Terry Fobbs (right) participates in the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Michigan Veterans Business Resource Center with Center Director Ed Ronders.



Mel Farmer (right) accepts the Michigan Municipal League's Outstanding Service Award from MML President Michael Matheny.



Allison Hudson (left) talks with an MRS customer who is considering self-employment as a vocational option.

People on the Move



Our very best wishes to **John Trieloff**, program director in the Energy Office, who retired April 21 after 29 years of state service promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy. "John was involved in a variety of diverse and complex projects. I relied on his ability, judgment, and attention to detail," said Supervisor **John Sarver**. "He has been a real professional and a pleasure to work with." John joined the Energy Office in 1977 when it was housed in the former Department of Commerce. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Western Michigan University and served in the 2nd Infantry Division, U.S. Army, in Korea during the Vietnam Era.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is pleased to announce the promotion of **Catherine Cronick** to a new site supervisor position in the Grand Rapids District, which serves Kent and Ionia counties. Catherine served as a counselor at MRS's Kalamazoo office for 17 years, working with local school districts, various community groups, and interns in the office. Prior to joining MRS, she worked as a vocational consultant/office supervisor and an employment counselor/supervisor in the Kalamazoo area. Catherine has a master's degree in counseling from Western Michigan University.



Retiring John Trieloff (right) and John Sarver pose with the legislative commendation John Trieloff received.

The Bureau of Commercial Services is pleased to announce the promotions of three staff. **Kristie Pfeifer** has been promoted to departmental analyst in the Enforcement Division. Previously, Kristie was a departmental technician in the Preliminary Review Unit and handled pre-investigative work against residential builders. She continues in that role, but is now additionally responsible for performing pre-investigative work of real estate appraisers' complaints.

Sharon Howell, Licensing Division, has been promoted to departmental technician. She will be assisting in the licensure review and processing of real estate appraiser, barber, and cosmetology licensing. A state employee since 2003, Sharon has many years of administrative support experience in the private sector.

Jennifer Olson has been promoted to departmental technician in the Licensing Division, where she will be assisting primarily with the centralized license renewal process. She has been a state employee since 1999.

The Bureau of Workforce Programs is pleased to welcome **Virginia Abdo** as a new policy specialist. Virginia previously worked as assistant licensing administrator in the Bureau of Commercial Services. Her new position includes the development and imple-

mentation of workforce development policies and assisting with the Michigan Regional Skills Alliance initiative.

The Michigan Career & Technical Institute is pleased to welcome **Janice Chilcote** as a new recreational therapist. Janice previously worked for the Heritage Community of Kalamazoo as life enrichment coordinator. She has a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation from Central Michigan University.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is pleased to welcome four regional representatives for the MRS Business Services Team. The reps will be building relationships with businesses, providing local labor market information, brokering MRS services for companies, and helping to educate MRS offices on business. This is being done to improve Michigan's economy and workforce by providing quality services to employers, filling job shortages in high growth and underserved industries, promoting more informed choices for people with disabilities by collaborating between the public and private sectors, and improving support to employers with clear and open lines of communications with MRS.

Candice Lee is serving MRS's Region I. She previously worked for Central Michigan University in various capacities, including family support coordinator for parents of deaf and blind children. She also has been a program assistant with the EightCAP, Inc., Head Start and an adjunct instructor at Mid-Michigan Community College. Candice has a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

Reynaldo (Rey) Guzman is serving Region II. He previously worked for the Michigan Department of Treasury as a financial analyst. Prior to that, he worked for the Department of Education/Treasury as a school services representative. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University.

Willie Boyd is serving Region III. In January 2003, Willie began working as an administrative officer for the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Arbor Heights Center; then as a financial analyst at the W.J. Maxey Training School. He has also worked as a contract specialist with the City of Detroit. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Evansville (Indiana).

David O. Archer is serving Region IV. In October 2003, David began working as an employment services specialist with the Michigan Employment Service Agency. Prior to that, he worked for many years as an employer service specialist. He has a Bachelor of Business degree from Northwood University. David will be showcasing his performing talent with the Metropolitan Detroit Chorale and Orchestra at the Michigan Premier of "The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace" on Sunday, May 21, at Fraser High School.

Workers' Comp Presents Service Awards to 28

By Norm Isotalo

In March, the Workers' Compensation Agency held its annual State of the Agency meeting, where the agency recognized staff members who had achieved milestone tenure levels.

Receiving service awards for their length of state service were: 35 years: Bruno Czyrka; 30 years: Ray Dwyer, Susan Jones, Paula Merwin, James Messenger, and Cheryl Switzer; 25 years: Florence Ables, Sandra Adams, Patty Curtis, Diane Harger, Lori Jenkins, Donna Kelly, Teresa McKiddie, Robert Mills, Albert Moore, Debra Morehouse, Varla O'Berry, Lori Raby, and Anne Williams; 20 years: Carol Bappert, Cheryl Cornellier, Debra Fedewa, Elizabeth Huerta, Julie Lenneman, Linda Tanner, and Ethel Ward; 15 years: Mark Long and Richard Zettel.

MIOSHA on the Move — Literally!

By Katie Benghauser

After months of planning, lots of sorting, and several days of packing, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) moved its offices to the Hollister Building in downtown Lansing while MIOSHA's offices in the General Office Building (GOB) are being refurbished. The "move committee" hosted a sloppy joe lunch on April 5 — the employees' last day in the GOB.

On the first day at the Hollister Building the following Monday, the MIOSHA Fun Committee welcomed everyone with an "aloha party" with leis, goody bags, and a hot dog lunch. MIOSHA expects to return to its remodeled offices in the GOB in September. About 120 staff participated in the move.



Enjoying MIOSHA's aloha party are Ken Hines, safety supervisor; Kay Salazar, safety supervisor; Terrilyn Jones, department technician; and Amber Sweeney, secretary.

Carroll Little Marks Half Century of State Service

Congratulations to Carroll D. Little, an administrative law judge with the State Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (SOAHR), who recently celebrated 50 years of state service!

Carroll joined the Michigan Employment Security Commission in the former Department of Labor as a liability examiner in 1956, later serving as a tax collector, an investigator, and then chief of investigation. He became an administrative law judge in 1972.

A graduate of the University of Michigan, Carroll earned his law degree at Wayne State University Law School and has done graduate work at both U of M and WSU. He has also attended the National Judicial College in Reno, Nev.



Carroll Little (left) is congratulated by SOAHR Director Peter Plummer.

How to File a Complaint Under ADA

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth has recently posted information on the DLEG website for the general public on how to file a complaint under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). DLEG employees who wish to file a complaint under ADA should continue to contact Myrtle Gregg-LaFay, DLEG's ADA coordinator, in the Office of Human Resources.

Commission for the Blind Counselor Raises Awareness About Albinism

By Susan Turney

Debbie Wilson has been a rehabilitation counselor for 12 years with the Michigan Commission for the Blind. She's an African American woman with albinism, and she's the mother of a now 21-year-old son who does not have albinism.

As Debbie told *The Flint Journal* in a recent article, when her son was in first grade he asked her, "Mom, are we white?" She replied, "No, we're not white. Mom just can't make color."

Debbie Wilson talks about how, in elementary school, her classmates would hit and tease her because she looked different. She has an older brother and sister with albinism, and kids at school would call them "albino" and beat them up on the way home.

To help other families avoid similar experiences, Debbie and Flint-area businesswoman Francia Malone, another African American woman with albinism, have established FAAN, the Flint Area Albinism Network. FAAN is a nonprofit organization for individuals and families living with albinism in Genesee County and the greater Thumb area.

The group's first goal is to educate people about albinism, which is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed. It's an inherited condition that

affects 17,000 people in the U. S. People with albinism have reduced pigment in their skin and hair, and most have low vision and are legally blind. (Contrary to myth, deafness is not associated with albinism.)

Although some people think people with albinism have chalk-white skin, white hair, and reddish eyes, this isn't always the case. Most people with albinism have blue eyes, but some have hazel or brown eyes. Debbie has blue eyes and skin the color of coffee with cream.

Most children with albinism are born to parents who have typical hair and eye pigmentation. For nearly all types of albinism, both parents must carry an albinism gene to have a child with the condition. There is no simple test to determine if a person carries the gene.

Debbie hopes that FAAN will provide information, support, and positive role models for people with albinism and their families.

Meanwhile, Debbie says people still look at her son and ask if she's his real mother. She says, "I just smile and say, 'Yes, I am.'"

For more information about the Flint Area Albinism Network, call (810) 730-2995, e-mail FAAN_2005@yahoo.com, or visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/faan_2005. For information about the National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH), a nonprofit organization that offers resources and support, call (800) 473-2310 or visit the website at www.albinism.org.



Debbie Wilson



Hurry Up, Spring!

Trying to coax warmer weather to arrive a little sooner, the DLEG Fun Committee sponsored an ice cream social March 29 at the Ottawa Building, Lansing. More than 100 employees enjoyed the sundaes, banana splits, frozen yogurt, and brownie/ice cream desserts. Pictured, l. to r., are Carolyn Parkinson, Department of Community Health, and DLEG staffers Patrick Hudson, Alice Wood, Gina DiNatale Coon, and Linda Cook. Alice and Linda planned the event and were assisted by Gina, Jennifer Farr, and Jim Kremer.

Biomass Energy Program Student Assistant Coordinates News Conference on the Environment

Our hats are off to Shawn Wozniak, student assistant with DLEG's Biomass Energy Program, who assisted the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee and National Biodiesel Board with the planning logistics for an East Lansing-Michigan State University news conference on improving the environment.

East Lansing Mayor Sam Singh joined local experts and Ryan Miller from the band Guster at the April 6 news conference to highlight how the city, MSU, and the band use biodiesel instead of conventional fuels to reduce emissions.

Shawn coordinated the event by getting the National Biodiesel Board, City of East Lansing, MSU, Greater Lansing Area Clean Cities, and various media outlets to participate. The band Guster was in town for a performance at MSU and to organize the Campus Consciousness Tour, which raises awareness in college towns about sustainable practices such as biodiesel. Both the city and MSU use a 20 percent blend of biodiesel (B20) in their diesel vehicles. Guster's tour bus is also fueled by B20.

Shawn will be leaving his DLEG position in May to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, where he has enrolled in the Master's International Program for the Peace Corps to study agricultural economics. After completion of two years of study, Shawn plans to spend 27 months in the Peace Corps, likely Africa, volunteering and conducting research. He'll then head back to Greensboro to write his master's thesis. Best of luck to you, Shawn.



At the April 6 news conference, Shawn Wozniak (second from left) poses with Adam Gardner of the band Guster; Joe Pisapia, Guster; and Amber Pearson, National Biodiesel Board.

Midland Fair Draws 400 Job Seekers

Congratulations to members of the Midland Job Fair Team, who planned and coordinated a successful job fair at Valley Plaza in Midland on April 12. Sponsors were the Mid Michigan District of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Saginaw-Midland-Bay Michigan Works!, the Bureau of Workforce Programs, Sanford American Legion Post #443, and the American Legion Department of Michigan. "This year we had 70 employers registered and over 400 job seekers attend," said Holly LaBelle of the MRS Mt. Pleasant office. "We had a steady flow of job seekers throughout the day." In addition, the Michigan Community Blood Center was able to collect 31 donations from both staff and job seekers.



Pictured are team members (front row, l. to r.) Grace Burger, Jennifer Wells, Mary Kent, Holly LaBelle, Amy Ames, and Julie Lonsway; second row: Paul Kuehl, Linda Hartgrove, Leonard Meisel, Linda Parent, Carrie Proswoski, and Alexa Matthews; and third row: Kevin Gorney, Richard Kryza, Ray Kirklin, David Jackson, Bill LaMere, Darlene Kalahar, Sue Mann, and Jim Garrison.

AWARE Support Team Is Industrious, Committed



From left to right, Nada Eggerstedt, Tammie Rousseau, AWARE support analyst; Vicki Clark, AWARE support technician; Elsie Duell, AWARE support manager; and José Cruz, AWARE support analyst.

Congratulations to members of the AWARE Support Team at Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). Each has received a Special Delivery from the Director.

The team was nominated by Nada Eggerstedt, departmental analyst at the Michigan Career and Technical Institute. Nada wrote: "Tammie Rousseau, Vicki Clark, José Cruz and Elsie Duell have been patient, kind, supportive, industrious, committed and fun to work with as we transition to a new student management system. They have worked with our staff as one team, respecting one another and doing what needs to be done to get the job done. Our thanks to them."

MEDC Group Congratulated for Community Block Grant Program

Congratulations to John Cyarnecki, Nancy Eddy, James Epolito, Lisa Green, Mary Kramer, Hans Larsen, Ken Murdock, Larry Roggenbuck, and Doug Voshell with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), who have been presented with Special Deliveries from the Director.

The group was nominated by Tonya Young, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), who wrote: "Congratulations to the MEDC staff that does a 'Great Job' of implementing the Community Development Block Grant Program within the State of Michigan. This small group of individuals has made a tremendous impact locally and regionally on low/moderate income persons, families, businesses, and communities throughout Michigan. National Community Development Week is April 17–23 and these individuals should be recognized for their hard work and dedication. Everyone in the unit has worked very hard to ensure that CDBG funds are distributed and utilized appropriately according to federal requirements. In addition, they have stepped up to the plate and absorbed additional work as staff downsizing occurred."



From left to right, Hans Larsen, loan officer, Infrastructure Finance; Larry Roggenbuck, infrastructure finance specialist, Program Administration; Lisa Green, infrastructure finance specialist, Program Administration; John Cyarnecki, director of Program Administration; James C. Epolito, president and CEO of MEDC; Ken Murdock, infrastructure finance specialist, Program Administration; Doug Voshell, managing director of Infrastructure Finance, Program Administration; and in front, Nancy Eddy, program analyst, Program Administration; and Mary Kramer, infrastructure development specialist, Program Administration.

Special Deliveries

William Brandon Has Positive Attitude, Character, and an Eagerness to Help

Congratulations to William Brandon, compliance analyst with the Motor Carrier Energy Grants & Information Division, Michigan Public Service Commission, who has been presented with a Special Delivery from the Director.

He was nominated by Lindsey Brege, motor carrier specialist, who wrote: "Bill's patience with both customers and co-workers and his attention to detail are why I feel he is worthy of formal acknowledgement. His commitment to quality customer service and teamwork makes him a great representative of our bureau. Bill's character, eagerness to help, and positive attitude brighten up our hectic division."



From left to right, Lindsey Brege; William Brandon; Mike Fielek, director, Motor Carrier Energy Grants & Information Division; and J. Peter Lark, chairman, Michigan Public Service Commission.

"Special Delivery from the Director"

I would like to nominate the following staff member to receive a "Great Job" acknowledgement from the Director:

Name of Nominee:	Submitted By:
Office/Bureau of Nominee	Job Title of Nominee
Telephone # of Nominator	Office Location of Nominee

The reason I am nominating this person:

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Office/Bureau Director:	Date:
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**Bureau Directors: Forward to Linda Cook—DLEG Media Office, 4th Floor, Ottawa Building, Lansing
E-mail: CookL1@Michigan.gov --OR-- FAX: 517-241-1580; Phone: 517-241-0199**

Workers' Compensation Agency Honors Former Committee Chair

By Norm Isotalo



Former DLEG Deputy Director Dave Plawewski (left) presents Ed Welch with his award.

Ed Welch, former chair of the Qualifications Advisory Committee, was recently honored with a "The Buck Stops With" award from the Workers' Compensation Agency for his contributions to the Qualifications Advisory Committee (QAC) and the workers' compensation program.

Ed recently left the QAC, where he was a representative of the public interest.

The QAC reviews and rates applicants interested in serving on the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates and Workers' Compensation Appellate Commission.

The award was presented at the Workers' Compensation Agency's recent State of the Agency meeting.

Ed is also a professor in the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at Michigan State University and director of MSU's Workers' Compensation Center.

Job Fair Helps Veterans Connect with Employers

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth has partnered with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) for the past several years for the purpose of sponsoring veterans job fairs. This is a natural since the VFW has the facility, the parking availability, and a vested interest in getting young veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan to join the organization.

This year, the Northwest Michigan Veterans Job Fair was held at the Cherryland VFW Post #2780 in Traverse City on Thursday, April 6.

"The Job Fair was a tremendous success," said Gary Perkins, a disabled veterans outreach worker for DLEG and one of the event organizers. "We last had a veterans job fair in Traverse City in October 2004. This recent event had about 30 percent more employers, and we saw more veterans in a shorter time span than we did in 2004. We know of veterans who are involved in the selection and hiring process as a result of this job fair."

The event was open to veterans of all ages, but the organizers were hoping to see many of the younger, recently discharged veterans. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, young veterans in age group 20 to 24 have an unemployment rate of 15.8 percent, twice the average of non-veterans in the same age group.

DLEG's Don Clover, a local veterans employment representative, said, "We will follow up with both veterans and employers who attended the job fair and attempt to get good numbers on just how effective the event was."

Joyce Hurley's Son Jason Served in Iraq

Army Staff Sgt. Jason Hurley served as an escort at a Kuwait venue while serving in Iraq for nine months as an Operations NCO. He is pictured here with comedian Kathy Griffin and JAG actress Keri Turner. Jason is the son of Joyce Hurley, Workers' Compensation Agency/Board of Magistrates, and the late Philip Hurley, MIOSHA. Jason returned to the states in March, where he now serves as an Army reservist. He is employed by Huffmaster Crisis Response in Troy as an operations manager.



We Get Letters ... and E-mails!

Dr. Jean M. Bailey, dean of Academic Services, Montcalm Community College, sent this e-mail message to **Diana L. Carpenter**, section manager, Regional Skills Alliance (RSA), Bureau of Workforce Programs: "Please extend my thanks to **Jodie [Gillespie]**, section operational manager for an informative presentation on Friday. You hit the mark with the update you gave us and helped the Michigan Occupational Deans Association Council members understand the RSA structure and purpose. Thanks so much for your time and making the trip to Monroe!"

Senior Safety Officer **Richard Kawucha**, Construction Safety and Health Division, MIOSHA, received this note from Carol Pasut, office manager with Olsen Cement Work, Dearborn Heights: "I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for the kindness and patience you showed us when you were dealing with our situation this week." Ms. Pasut also stated that Olsen Cement Work appointed a safety director, downloaded MIOSHA information from the website, set up training for its employees, called the Red Cross for first aid training, and then called **Pat Sullivan** from MIOSHA's Consultation Education and Training Division to set up more training. She also mentioned that Pat was very helpful and informative.

Senior Onsite Safety Consultant **Bill Shane**, with MIOSHA's Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division, serves as a liaison with the DNR Parks and Recreation Division's Gaylord District Safety Committee to help Northern Michigan State Parks with their safety programs. Outgoing District Safety Committee Chair Burr Mitchell had this to say: "I can't thank you enough for all the help you have given me and the committee over the years, and I am sure Mr. Blake Gingrich, supervisor, Hoeft State Park, will find your guidance as valuable as I have."

An e-mail message was sent to **Cindy Zastrow**, CET Division, MIOSHA, in response to the training she recently provided for 160 people. "Thank you very much, Cindy, for the excellent job you did with the Asbestos Awareness Training. We will definitely keep you in mind for future training. It also helps to have someone such as you as a contact when questions come up. If there is anything we can do for you, just give us a call!"

Peggy Kennedy, Michigan Association of Home Builders, sent this thank you note to **Tom Swindlehurst** with the CET Division, MIOSHA: "Thank you for addressing our remodelers' group in Clare. I know the attendees found your presentation informative. They will take this information back to their local associations."

Gerry Noronha with MIOSHA's General Industry Safety and Health Division recently conducted an investigation at the Trinity Tool Company in Fraser. Karen Fox with Trinity Tool called to say, "You have a great guy on your team. These things are never easy, but Gerry was so professional and helpful that the experience was positive."

Dan Burtnett with Sparrow Health System's Patient Financial Services Department, Lansing, sent this e-mail message about **Kathy Witchell**, claims examiner, Workers' Compensation Agency: "I recently completed this survey online and had an afterthought I would like to pass along related to the process. I would just like to thank and commend Kathy Witchell, who is our contact for hearing requests. She is just awesome to work with and gets results. She is just the best and I hope you realize the value of this associate as we do. She really works hard on our behalf. THANKS!!!!"

Chris Williams, Corporation Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, received a phone call from a customer, who stated, "I just want to thank you so much for your help yesterday. I meant to call you before I sent you the fax. But I got caught in a meeting and I was just buried until last night. So, I didn't want the day to go by without telling you how much I appreciated your stepping in and helping me with that. Have a wonderful day, and I look forward to this foundation growing and being alive and well here in Michigan."

Anna Zaske, Customer Service Unit, Corporation Division, Bureau of Commercial Services, was the subject of this happy e-mail message from a customer in South Carolina: "This morning I spoke to a lady at your office. I am sorry to say I did not make a note of her name. Please see the job number referenced above. I requested a certificate of good standing to be faxed to me for a nonprofit corporation. It was probably less than 10 minutes after this conversation that the fax arrived at my office in SC. I am very impressed with the level of service and quick response I received. Thank you! Please share this with the person who took my order, their supervisors and whoever might have an interest."

Scott Blakeney, manager of Health Promotions & Publications, Department of Community Health (DCH), sent this e-mail message regarding **Michigan LEGwork**: "DCH has researched making our newsletter more attractive. During this process, we looked at what other departments are doing and liked yours the best. Could you please tell me what software you are using? We promise not to make it look just like yours!"

